

The Impact of *Pesantren* Environment on MBKM Implementation: ELT Student' Obstacles

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Abstract

This study aims at examining how pesantren environment become obstacles for ELT student in the implementation of MBKM at University of al Qolam Malang. Based on qualitative method employed using interview it is discovered three challenges in terms of obtaining permission to observe Gus at the *pesantren*, the use of communication technology, specifically social media, which respondent need to use in order to continue communicating with their classmates and lecturers regarding lectures, and time management, as the requirements of MBKM often conflicted with their regular schedule.

Key terms: MBKM, Pesantren, ELT

INTRODUCTION

In the context of higher education in Indonesia, the Independent Campus Learning Policy (MBKM) -curriculum initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, aimed to prepare superior and competitive human resources for the 4.0 industrial revolution (Sahreebanu, 2022) -marks a significant step towards reforming the education system to be more inclusive and relevant. MBKM is an independent higher education learning program which provides creative, non-restrictive learning to have student' needs (Walef, 2023). MBKM policy concerns with industrial factors through allowing student to select programs and transfer credits, focusing on the needs of the business and industrial world (Kodrat, 2021). Through giving student the freedom to explore learning activities out of formal lectures, MBKM tries to equip student with the skills needed in the world of work. MBKM is a policy which encourages student to master science from diverse perspectives and equips them to confront changes in science and technology in the future (Yulia, 2023). Moreover MBKM is the policy of the Minister of Education, Culture and Independent Culture aims to stimulate student to study various sciences that will assist them in entering the world of work (Supriati, 2022).

Despite its benefits, challenges in the implementation of MBKM emerge. One of them is curriculum similarity between departments or universities, distinct pedagogical information systems, and lack of partnership opportunities (Anggraeni, 2023). Additionally, challenges in implementing MBKM involve limited funds, nonoptimal academic information system, as well as lack of talent, and information about the program (Supriati, 2022). In

addition obstacles in MBKM implementation consist of the lack of full acceptance of the policy, socialization of credit score assessment mechanisms, renewal of LMS and internship mechanisms, and collaboration between agencies (Hasanah, 2022). Most lecturers underwent difficulties in funding and abilities to convey ideas and find suitable references, but their productivity was still quite proper (Salim, 2022). Meanwhile, challenges in the implementation of the MBKM curriculum involve curriculum adjustments, funding, and academic information system adjustments (Alfian, 2023). Furthermore, the biggest obstacles faced by MBKM institutions are lack of information, regulation, and the readiness of references (Bisri, 2023).

Furthermore, some studies on Challenges of MBKM had been previously conducted by some researchers such as Hanapi et al (2023); Muid (2022); Supriati (2022); and Nafisah et al (2023). Hanapi et al (2023) investigated the challenges and dilemmas in the implementation of MBKM at private tertiary education departments within the IPS (Social Sciences) family in Lombok. Their study employed a qualitative research method more precisely library research (literature review) and field study. The findings of their study demonstrated a lack of budgetary support from most institutions, including insufficient competence and concern among lecturers, yielding in a low level of student interest in that implementation. On the other hand, the dilemma confronted in the implementation was that the curriculum and academic culture were primarily developed internally within tertiary institutions, while externally, there was a scarcity of partner institutions which shared the similar vision as the business

In addition, Muid (2022) examined the supporting, and inhibiting factors for the MBKM curriculum at the Arabic Language Education Department, Jambi University. The research method utilized was field research, which included qualitative research. The data gathered from primary data and secondary data sources and the data collection techniques used were documentation, observation and interviews. The research results showed that: 1) the implementation of MBKM at this campus was still improper because there was confusion in the process, so it was required adaptations related to the curriculum and facilities, 2) the supporting factors were the willingness and enthusiasm of the lecturers and student as seen from their cohesiveness in preparing for the establishment of MBKM, while 3) the inhibiting factor was the need to have a lot of MoU from diverse institutions. Meanwhile, other challenges were the readiness and skills of student to teach and guide in schools

Similarly Supriati (2022) identified the preparation for implementing the MBKM curriculum and the challenges. The research design used was survey conducted through a descriptive survey. The subjects in this study involved lecturers, student, and education staff in the PLS research program. The challenges faced by them were limited funds and lack of the academic information, talent, information about the MBKM curriculum.

In addition, Nafisah et al (2023) did literature review to identify the past and current use of the MBKM curriculum in academic context. A literature review of relevant papers, scientific journals, and other publications on the MBKM Program was carried out to analyze more about the implementation, challenges, and benefits of the program. Several important conclusions were drawn from the results of this literature review. First, the MBKM Program had not been fully implemented in higher education, and there were several challenges which must be overcome. Second, problem solving might be more efficient if all interested parties worked together. Having evaluation in the implementation of the MBKM curriculum was essential to make it more successful. By having a literature review, the university was able to learn new problems, develop plans to address those problems, and improve the learning opportunities available to the student. Based on the research background, this current study aims at investigating the objective i.e. “to identify how pesantren environment become

obstacles for ELT student in the implementation of MBKM at University of al Qolam Malang.”

MBKM Curriculum

Independent Campus Learning Policy (MBKM) was introduced in 2019 as a major initiation in reformation of Indonesian higher education system (Anggara, 2023). It is an independent higher education learning program designed to encourage creative, non-restrictive learning which leads to students' needs (Walef, 2023). MBKM is a policy of the Minister of Education and Culture, that aims to prepare students to get diverse fields of knowledge required when entering the world of work. MBKM is a form of learning which expects an essential change towards the implementation of a better and quality pedagogy (Saudah, 2022). This new curriculum is government policy to enrich various learning experiences and practical skills. However, MBKM is subject to be interpreted and adapted into developed existing curriculum (Habibi, 2022). MBKM refers to a policy in Indonesia for higher education which propose independent study, entrepreneurial activities, research, student exchange, practical work/internship, teaching assistance, and humanitarian projects (Arjanto, 2022). The MBKM program aims to provide students with multiple skills and enhance soft skills, that ensure they are ready to work independently and innovatively (Salim et al., 2022). It is also a policy of kemendikbudristekdikti which encourages students to master science and equips them to confront future changes in science and technology (Yulia, 2023). This curriculum is a pedagogical policy innovation designed to match students' skills with the market and improve their satisfaction with the program (Harahap, 2023). This policy aims to propose the autonomy and innovation of higher education institutions, and enhance the quality of education and graduates' abilities (Anggara, 2023).

MBKM refers to an autonomous and flexible form of learning in tertiary institutions so as to create a learning culture which is innovative, not restrictive, and in accordance with students' need. Diverse forms of learning activities outside campus, include having internships or work practices in industry or other workplaces, conducting community service projects in villages, teaching in education units, participating in student exchanges, doing research, entrepreneurial activities, making studies/ independent projects, and participating in humanitarian programs. All these activities must be conducted with the lecturer's guidance. The curriculum is expected to be able to provide field contextual experiences which can improve student competency as a whole, be ready for work, or create new jobs (Hermanto et al., 2023). MBKM curriculum aims to encourage students for the rapid development of technology, changes in work life, and skills, aiming to achieve optimal learning outcomes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Rahayu et al., 2022). MBKM curriculum enhances students' hard and soft skills enabling them to interact effectively with communication, analyze workplace turmoil, and create innovative and creative works (Jainah et al., 2022). This kind of curriculum promotes creativity, innovation, and new learning methods, leading to benefits such as competence, comprehension, innovation challenges, soft and hard skills (Mandiri, 2023). MBKM curriculum improves students' competence in English language skills, digital literacy, and digital engineering, leading to job readiness in 4.0. industrial revolution (Ingsih, 2022).

MBKM curriculum highlights and strengthens industrial factors in pedagogy through giving students the right to select programs and concerning more on the needs of the business and industrial world (Kodrat, 2021). MBKM implementation has significantly affected the

autonomy and innovation of Indonesian higher education institutions.

However its impact on quality of education and graduates' capabilities is still uncertain (Anggara, 2023). The MBKM curriculum positively impacts students' skills, character, confidence, and communication abilities, as proved by its success (Sinaga, 2023). The MBKM curriculum is effective in preparing university graduates for the real world of work and has been well-facilitated by campuses (Defrizal, 2022).

Challenges of MBKM curriculum implementation involve limited funds, non-optimal academic information system, lack of talent, and information about the program (Supriati et al, 2022). The challenges confronted in implementing the independent campus learning curriculum (MBKM) consist of political and economic factors, regulations and legislation (Palangda et al, 2023). Challenges in implementing MBKM involve curriculum similarity between departments or universities, different pedagogical information systems, and limited partnership opportunities (Anggraeni, 2023). Challenges to the implementation of the MBKM curriculum consist of curriculum adjustments, funding, and academic information system adjustments (Alfian, 2023). Challenges of MBKM implementation involve adapting the curriculum, difficulty in converting the program to study program courses, and low student quotas from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Ulum, 2023). Challenges in MBKM implementation for Arabic subjects involve local content, the school's scientific core, and specific learning outcomes (Rahman, 2023). The biggest obstacles confronted by MBKM institutions are lack of information, regulation, and the readiness of references (Bisri, 2023).

Pesantren

Pesantren was originated from the sixteenth century, when learning centers were established, known as a place for learning the Islamic faithful (santris). Meanwhile Surau referred to a place for worship in early Southeast Asia, while pondok was derived from the travelers' inns (Ar., funduq) of the Middle East. Madrasah refers to the generic name for such schools within the Islamic world (Safaningrum & Setiawan, 2020). Pesantren is defined as a traditional Islamic educational institution which studies religious knowledge and emphasizes moral formation by the guidance of kiai and the kitab kuning book (Umar, 2022). Pesantren-based madrasah model integrates educational processes, making a holistic education process which maximizes the true Islamic education curriculum (Ihsan, 2019). Pesantren in Indonesian have a strong commitment to the 'spirit of education', that enable to lead to high academic achievement despite austere situation (Nilan, 2009). Pesantren institution has the same rights and obligations as other education according to their respective levels, and enable to produce graduates ready to work at various career levels (Mubarok, 2021). Pesantren curriculum has both negative and positive impacts, that involve surviving change, improving quality, and adapting to changing era guidance. The challenges faced by the education system reform schools, namely macro and micro challenges (Erniati, 2017). Indonesian pesantren have grown over time because of their adaptability in changing contexts, adopting modern schooling curriculum and incorporating non-religious subjects into curricula (Isbah, 2020). Pesantren can be agents of change for making a better social life and society around, and perform environmentally friendly activities (Herdiansyah et al., 2019).

Pesantren environment is considered less efficacious in growing students' intention to have Islamic entrepreneurship compared to university students not living in Pesantren (Fitriana, 2022). Pesantren in equatorial setting employ artificial environments, reforestation, and participatory approaches to manage environmental disasters (Aulia, 2018).

ELT Students

ELT students have critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, creativity, and effective communication as essential 21st century abilities (Feyza & Seyda, 2023). ELT students perceive student autonomy in language learning as important, with both genders valuing similar aspects (Yigit & Yildirim, 2018). Students in ELT context negotiate their religious faiths by interfaith dialogues, love, and humility (Mambu, 2016). ELT students at Islamic campus enjoy Islamic atmosphere, affordable tuition, religious education, professional lecturers, and scholarship availability (Irwansyah, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This present study is conducted due to one goal i.e. to identify how pesantren environment become obstacles for ELT student in the implementation of MBKM at University of al Qolam Malang. The chosen pesantren institutions are hybrid pesantren whereby they adopt both salaf (traditional) and modern teaching and learning i.e. *Raudlatul Ulum 1 and Raudlatul Ulum 2*. Accordingly, descriptive qualitative research design is employed to figure out the answer for the objective. Qualitative research refers to as study whereby by the data are in the form of words which need comprehensive exploration and interpretation as well as the results of the study is represented using words containing comprehensive elaboration of the analyzed data (Muyassaroh, 2020). The data of this current study are in the form of words taken from the result of interview toward the pupils of the pesantren selected as well as student of Al Qolam University

The data of this current study are gathered using interviews. The interviews are addressed to pupils of the pesantren of *Raudlatul Ulum 1 and Raudlatul Ulum 2* Malang as well as student of Al Qolam University.

FINDINGS

In order to find ELT student' perceptions of challenges on MBKM implementation the results of the interview toward the respondent are provided in three main aspects i.e. 1) their understanding of MBKM, 2) their opinions on benefits of MBKM, and 3) their challenges on the implementation of MBKM at University of al Qolam Malang.

1) their understanding of MBKM

There are two things in the respondent's experience as an ELT student living in an Islamic boarding school, namely when at the Islamic boarding school the respondent feels calm because of the religious lessons they receive. The second one was that when the respondent were on campus, their curiosity and desire to compete were high after seeing competent lecturers.

Respondent did not completely understand what was meant by MBKM. The only

thing they might know is the existence of cross-study programs, namely the Classroom Management course, which requires some student to join classes from other study programs, namely the Islamic Broadcasting Commission study program. This is because this new curriculum was only implemented this year.

2) their opinions on benefits of MBKM

Meanwhile, respondent also felt the benefits of MBKM, such as being more open-minded and learning a lot of new things. Respondent also added that on campus they prepare for planning at the Islamic boarding school. Apart from that, respondent often share new experiences from MBKM with their colleagues. There are even those who have saved money for campus outings as a result of the MBKM program.

3) their challenges of MBKM

The difficulty that respondent experienced in implementing MBKM was the difficulty in obtaining permission to observe Gus at the Islamic boarding school. One example of this difficulty was when the respondent applied for permission from Gusnya to conduct observations and visit a hotel in Malang as part of the final assignment for the Guiding and Tourism course, of the six student who applied, only two student were allowed to participate as representatives.

Apart from the difficulties regarding permits for observation at the hotel above, respondent admitted that the MBKM program initiated many activities for new student so that there were many licensing difficulties in various aspects. The next difficulty lies in the use of communication technology, specifically social media, which respondent need to use in order to continue communicating with their classmates and lecturers regarding lectures. In this case, respondent are prohibited from using cell phones, which means that respondent cannot access social media. The only way respondent can keep in touch with classmates and lecturers is by queuing up for a special cellphone that is used by all student who are currently student, where on the cellphone there is one WhatsApp account that is used for all student.

The next challenge faced by respondent since the introduction of MBKM is time management. This is because in Islamic boarding schools the activity schedule is very busy, starting from...: This of course makes respondent lack time because in MBKM student are required to receive assessments in the form of projects and other real activities, which makes respondent need more time than before the implementation of this new curriculum.

The next difficulty that is more specific to English learning is in the Digital Platform Learning course where in this course student are required to produce digital-based learning products. The difficulty lies in the process of carrying out these tasks, such as taking turns using WhatsApp to coordinate with group members and recording sound using a laptop.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into ELT student' perceptions of MBKM program. The interviews reveal three central aspects of the student' views: their understanding of MBKM, their opinions on its benefits, and the challenges they face with its implementation. This section discusses these aspects, outlines the general trends observed, and presents implications for improving MBKM implementation.

A significant finding from the interviews is that the student generally possess a varying level of understanding about the MBKM program. While some student demonstrated a clear grasp of the program's objectives and structure, others revealed confusion or incomplete knowledge. This discrepancy in understanding suggests that while MBKM holds potential for enhancing student' academic experience, its communication and dissemination could be improved. Student' understanding of the program appears to be influenced by the amount of orientation or exposure they have received. It is crucial for universities to ensure that all student, particularly in the ELT field, receive adequate and consistent information about MBKM's goals and opportunities. This could be achieved through workshops, seminars, and accessible online resources.

Regarding the perceived benefits of MBKM, the majority of student identified various positive outcomes, such as increased opportunities for experiential learning, exposure to real-world teaching environments, and enhanced employability. These responses align with the overall goals of MBKM to provide student with a more holistic education and improve their readiness for the workforce. The student emphasized that the program enabled them to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings, fostering personal and professional growth. However, it is worth noting that some student highlighted that the benefits of MBKM were not always immediately apparent or might depend on the specific courses or activities they were involved in. Therefore, while MBKM offers considerable advantages, it is important to ensure that the program's implementation is consistent across various departments and courses, providing equal opportunities for all student.

The challenges faced by student in the implementation of MBKM were perhaps the most varied and complex aspect revealed in the interviews. The student mentioned challenges related to time management, as the requirements of MBKM often conflicted with their regular academic schedule. Balancing multiple responsibilities, including coursework and MBKM-related activities, proved to be a source of stress for many. Additionally, some student pointed out logistical challenges, such as limited access to external institutions for internships or collaborative projects, especially in remote or underserved areas. Another challenge highlighted was the lack of proper guidance and mentorship in some cases, which made it difficult for student to maximize the potential of MBKM opportunities. These challenges underscore the need for better coordination between academic departments, external partners, and student to ensure that MBKM activities are accessible and manageable.

The general trends observed from these findings have several important implications for the continued development of the MBKM program. First, a more structured and thorough orientation process for student could help address gaps in understanding. This could include detailed briefings about MBKM's purpose, potential benefits, and ways to navigate its challenges. Second, to fully realize the program's benefits, institutions must ensure equal access to MBKM activities, ensuring that student from all backgrounds and locations have similar opportunities for experiential learning. Furthermore, addressing the logistical and time-related challenges requires the implementation of flexible solutions, such as online internships or modular courses, and clearer scheduling coordination with regular academic activities.

In conclusion, while MBKM presents a promising opportunity for ELT student to expand their learning beyond the classroom, the program's success hinges on improving its accessibility, communication, and support structures. Universities and policymakers should consider these findings in order to refine and enhance the program for future

student.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore ELT student' perceptions of the challenges related to the implementation of MBKM program. Through interviews, three main aspects were examined: student' understanding of MBKM, their opinions on its benefits, and the challenges they face in its implementation.

The findings reveal that while student has a general understanding of MBKM, there is a significant variance in the depth of their knowledge. This indicates a need for more effective communication and orientation to ensure that all student is well-informed about the program's goals and opportunities. In terms of benefits, student highlighted MBKM's potential to enhance their practical skills, improve employability, and offer more meaningful learning experiences. However, the program's full potential is often constrained by challenges such as time management issues, limited access to external internships, and a lack of proper guidance.

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